

The Idaho Spokesman Review
Student's NIC graduation comes before high school's

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June 4, 2005

Before Rachel Sychra's parents could watch their daughter graduate from high school on June 2, they had to sit through another ceremony.

Sychra, a Coeur d'Alene home school student, graduated from North Idaho College on May 20, almost a couple weeks before wrapping up her high school career.

During her sophomore year in high school, the teen enrolled at NIC through the college's dual-enrollment program. The program allows high school students to earn college credits simultaneously.

"Most people finish high school and then go on," Sychra said. With her associate's degree in general studies complete, Sychra is now looking to begin a career as a nanny. She's starting with a job for a Post Falls family and, eventually, hopes to go overseas to work.

"I'd like to go over and become a lot more immersed in the culture," she said.

When Sychra first enrolled at NIC, she said she was a little nervous and worried about fitting in.

"Everyone has been really nice to me," she said. "When I first came (to NIC) I was a little bit shy because I hadn't been in the classroom for seven years."

At NIC, Sychra became a peer tutor and also worked at the college coffee bar in the Student Union Building.

Though college wasn't particularly challenging to her, according to Sychra, she said it was definitely a different environment than what she was used to.

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She said her mom kept a very set schedule. Sychra basically worked alone and on her own unless she had a question or needed help. Sychra enjoys sewing, cooking and reading. She said it was really neat how, to fulfill her home economics requirement, her mom allowed her to plan menus for the entire family, cook meals and even help with the budget.

The family moved to Coeur d'Alene from Blanchard, Idaho, so Sychra would be closer to school. She said her father worried about her driving so far to get to school. Now they are just blocks away from NIC.

Sychra said NIC's dual-enrollment program is "really wonderful for students who want a little bit more of a challenge."